

Appropriations Committee
Public Hearing – February 21, 2017
H.B. No. 7027 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM
ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2019, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.

Shaye A. Roscoe, Executive Director
Boys & Girls Club of the Lower Naugatuck Valley

I am Shaye Roscoe, and I am the Executive Director of the Boys & Girls Club of the Lower Naugatuck Valley. Our Boys & Girls Club is a member of the Connecticut Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs along with 16 other Boys & Girls Clubs who combine to serve more than 50,000 youth during out-of-school time all year long. The Boys & Girls Club of the Lower Naugatuck Valley serves 3,317 youth in the Lower Naugatuck Valley and has been doing so for the past 60 years. On behalf of the Boys & Girls Club of the Lower Naugatuck Valley's members and their families, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to express my opposition to H.B. No. 7027 An Act Concerning the STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2019, AND MAKING PPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.

I am compelled to testify to oppose the proposed reduction and consolidation of Neighborhood Youth Center funding into a pool of funds (Student Support Services) designed to serve far too divergent population groups and needs.

According to kidscount.org¹, 22% of young people in the Lower Naugatuck Valley fail to graduate from high school on time. We offer programming focused on academic success, including homework and tutoring programs that help kids develop good study habits. Power Hour: Making Minutes Count provides engaging homework help that encourages Club members to become self directed learners. Last year more than 950 members utilized this program. In addition, last year 100% of our high school seniors graduated, and 100% of those graduates moved on to higher education.

According to dpweinerlaw.com², 10% of all arrests in Connecticut were of juveniles under the age of 18—almost 12,000 arrests. 71% of those arrests were 15-17 year olds. Our programming empowers youth at an early age to become good leaders in the community with passion for helping others through programs such as Torch Club and Keystone Club. More than 250 members were involved in planning, implementing, and/or participating in community service projects at our Club last year, allowing them to acquire skills in leadership and decision making while contributing to their communities.

According to kidscount.org, 22,000³ of Connecticut's teens ages 12-17 participate in binge alcohol drinking. 25,000 in this same age group use Marijuana. Our healthy lifestyle programs teach kids to eat right, keep fit, and form positive relationships. Our Be Smart, Don't Start and SMART Moves programs are just two ways we teach kids how to engage in positive behaviors, and teach them how to say no to negative behaviors and peer pressure. More than 350 of our

¹ <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>

² <http://www.dpweinerlaw.com/Stamford-criminal-law-blog>

³ <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>

members participated in gang prevention or substance abuse prevention programs and activities last year. More than 1,050 of our members participated in the daily Triple Play Daily Challenge program, which focuses on eating right, keeping fit, and forming positive relationships. In addition more than 24,600 nutritionally balanced free meals and snacks were provided to Club members last year.

I'd like to thank the committee for the opportunity to testify and urge you to maintain the Neighborhood Youth Center funding through the Department of Education.